THE BLACK VORTEX
CHAPTER 12
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WHAT the DUCK?!

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

THE BLACK VORTEX

CHAPTER 12

Previously in the Black Vortex…

Billions of years ago, an ancient race named the Viscardi were gifted an object of immense cosmic power by a Celestial. This artifact, known as the Black Vortex, transformed the user, imbuing them with cosmic energy. However, the power of this object caused the Viscardi to turn on each other, annihilating their own race from within.

When Mister Knife, a.k.a. J'Son, Peter Quill's father, obtained the Black Vortex, Peter and Kitty Pryde stole the artifact and recruited the Guardians of the Galaxy and the X-Men for help. So far Gamora, the elder Beast, Angel, Cyclops, Groot, and Iceman have all submitted to the Black Vortex, gaining cosmic powers in an effort to save the galaxy from the hands of Mister Knife.

Spartax and all of its inhabitants have been encased in amber. Thane, son of Thanos, submitted to the power of the Black Vortex and stole the planet for Mister Knife. Knife plans to partner with the Brood in order to build his own empire across the galaxy. The Brood's plan? To burrow into those trapped in the amber's living death, to plant eggs in their heads, and to hatch a whole new army, billions strong.

Now the X-Men, Nova, and the Guardians of the Galaxy will have to race against time to save their friends.

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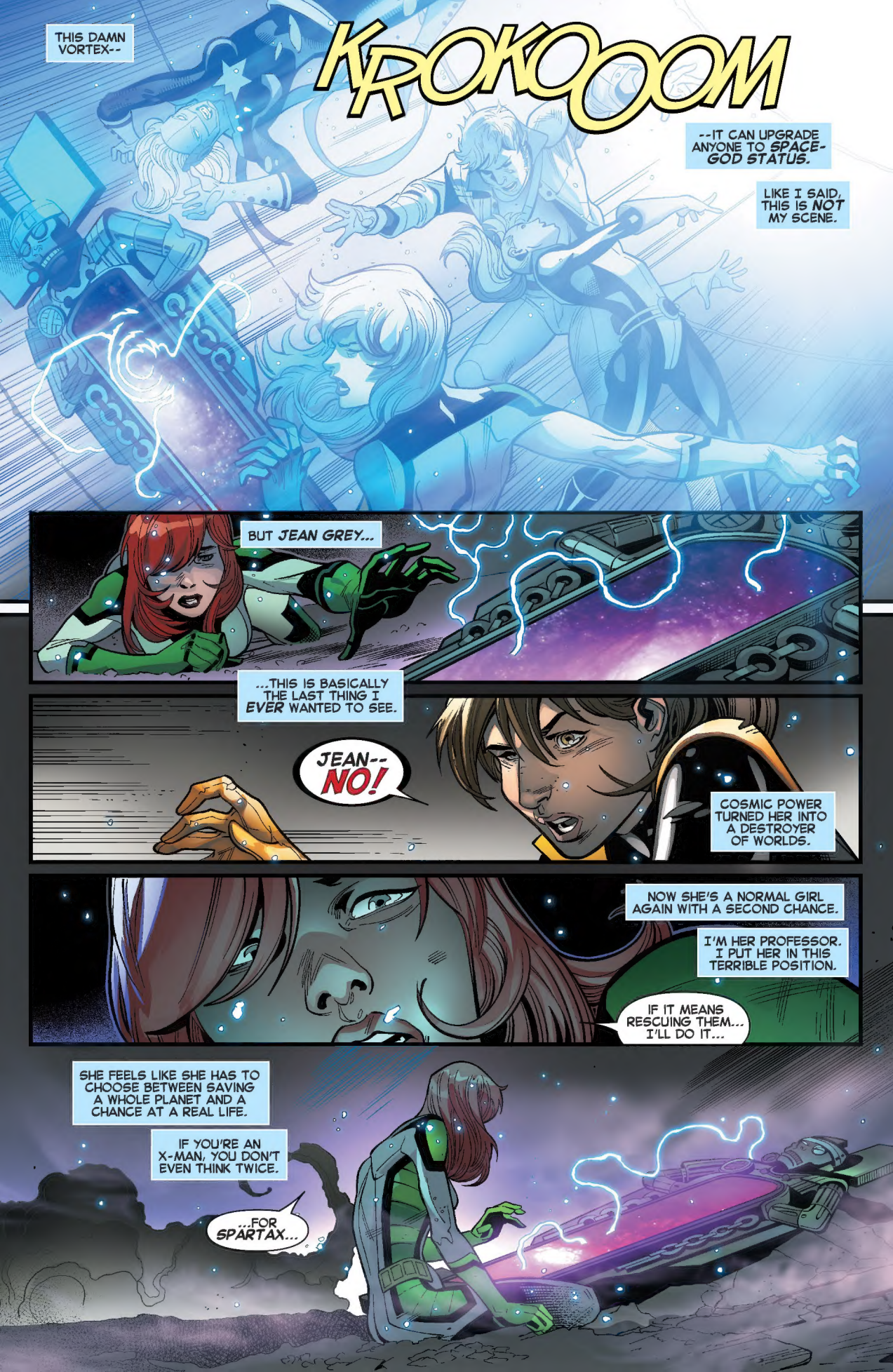
I HATE SPACE.
SPACE IS NOT MY SCENE.
IT IS SO NOT MY JAM.

I WOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE EXCEPT FOR MY BOYFRIEND, PETER...
...THE THINGS WE DO FOR CUTE BOYS.
THE PLANET SPARTAX.
WHERE?!
DON'T PUSH YOURSELF, MAGIK--
I'M FINE, KITTY.
IN FRONT OF DRAX--
SPACE ISN'T MAGIK'S THING EITHER, BUT YOU WOULDN'T KNOW IT--
IN ORBIT AROUND SPARTAX.
GOT HER.
KRSSSHING
RAAAAUGH--!
--BY THE WAY SHE DIVES RIGHT IN.
THANK GOD, BECAUSE WE ARE SERIOUSLY SHORT-HANDED AGAINST THE SLAUGHTER LORDS.
AND THEN THERE'S THE BROOD.

EVERYONE ON PLANET SPARTAX IS TRAPPED IN AMBER WITH BROOD INFESTOIDS BURROWING THEIR WAY TO THEIR SKULLS--
--SO THEY CAN LAY THEIR EGGS IN THEIR BRAINS.
YEAH, I'M NOT GONNA SLEEP TONIGHT, EITHER.
OR EVER.
IF WE FAIL, IT'S THE WHOLE PLANET...AND THEN THE GALAXY.
SO HOW DO YOU SHOO AWAY BILLIONS OF FLIES SWARMING ON A PICNIC THE SIZE OF ONE AND A HALF EARTHS?
DID I MENTION WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME? (I HATE SPACE.)
PLAN A: KEEP THE SLAUGHTER LORDS OCCUPIED WHILE STORM TRIES TO FREEZE THEM OFF--
KITTY-- THE ATMOSPHERE IS IN CHAOS, I'M STRUGGLING TO--
SURPRISE!
THEY FOUND ME!
DAMN-- STORM'S OUT!
PLAN B: I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT PETER'S GONNA SAY ABOUT IT.
BUT FIRST WE NEED--
LOOK!

KROKOOOM
--CAPTAIN MARVEL!
WITH THE BLACK VORTEX
CAROL! ARE YOU OKAY?
YOU DID IT! YOU GOT IT!
THANK THE LORD FOR CAROL DANVERS.
SHE'S RIGHT... BEHIND ME--

SURRENDER THE BLACK VORTEX!
GARA, AN ELDER OF THE UNIVERSE.
SHE SAYS SHE'S TWELVE BILLION YEARS OLD. HOW DO YOU TALK TO SOMEONE LIKE THAT?
HELL NO!
DON'T LET HER TAKE IT--
MY THREE O'CLOCK! NOW!
GOT HER.
KRSSSHING


THIS DAMN VORTEX--
KROKOOOM
--IT CAN UPGRADE ANYONE TO SPACE-GOD STATUS.
LIKE I SAID, THIS IS NOT MY SCENE.
BUT JEAN GREY...
...THIS IS BASICALLY THE LAST THING I EVER WANTED TO SEE.
JEAN-- NO!
COSMIC POWER TURNED HER INTO A DESTROYER OF WORLDS.
NOW SHE'S A NORMAL GIRL AGAIN WITH A SECOND CHANCE.
I'M HER PROFESSOR. I PUT HER IN THIS TERRIBLE POSITION.
IF IT MEANS RESCUING THEM... I'LL DO IT...
SHE FEELS LIKE SHE HAS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SAVING A WHOLE PLANET AND A CHANCE AT A REAL LIFE.
IF YOU'RE AN X-MAN, YOU DON'T EVEN THINK TWICE.
...FOR SPARTAX...

OH, NO...
OH, YES.
I WISH I HAD TOLD HER PLAN B.
I... SUBMIT...

HUH? PETER--?
STOP, JEAN--
--IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE YOU THIS TIME.
AND THEN MY DUMB BOYFRIEND DOES SOMETHING REALLY DUMB.
REALLY ADORABLE, BUT REALLY DUMB.
I KNOW YOU AND COSMIC POWER GOT ISSUES. I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
BESIDES, IF I LET YOU DO THIS, KITTY WOULD KILL ME.
I HAD PLAN B ALL FIGURED OUT. ONLY ONE OF US CAN USE THE VORTEX TO SAVE SPARTAX--
--BUT IT ISN'T PETER.
NOW LET'S SEE WHAT UNLIMITED POWER DOES TO A FARM BOY FROM COLORADO--
BUT IF I TOLD HIM PLAN B, HE NEVER WOULD HAVE LET ME--

'SUP, BRO?!

FACE IT, I RULE!
DUDE, I'M SO PUMPED!
TO MY SON--
--THE LORD OF STARS!

NO!

NO!

NO.
PETER?
I CAN'T DO IT, KITTY. I CAN'T SUBMIT TO THE VORTEX--THAT'S NOT WHO I WANNA BE. I WANNA BE A BETTER MAN.
FOR YOU.
YOU WERE RIGHT, WE CAN'T USE THE VORTEX--
OH PETER, IF ONLY YOU KNEW HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU.
IF ONLY YOU KNEW HOW WRONG I WAS.
WELL THAT MIGHT BE IRRELEVANT.
WE FAILED.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU PLAY WITH.
LOOK DEEP INTO THE VORTEX... AND SEE...

...THIS IS MY HOME PLANET. ***VISCARDI.*** DESTROYED TWELVE BILLION YEARS AGO.

IT DIDN'T TAKE US ***LONG***--NOT ONCE WE HAD THE POWER OF THE BLACK VORTEX. WE ***ERADICATED*** OURSELVES FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

THIS ISN'T EVEN THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO. MANY PLANETS FELL ***FASTER***. MANY EMPIRES FELL ***HARDER***.

PLACES, RACES, NAMES YOU WILL ***NEVER*** KNOW, LOST FOREVER BECAUSE OF THE ***BLACK VORTEX***.

HOW LONG DID ***MIGHTY HALA*** SURVIVE WITH THE VORTEX BEFORE IT CRACKED IN TWO? WAS THERE EVEN TIME FOR THE THE SUN TO ***RISE AND SET?***

THE VORTEX ***ELEVATES*** YOU TO A COSMIC ENTITY. BUT THERE IS NO ACCOUNTING FOR WHAT IT DOES TO YOUR ***HEART***.

I ***MYSELF*** MURDERED THE LAST VISCARDI.

IN MY HUBRIS. MY GREED. MY ***BLINDNESS***.

I SHOULD HAVE ***DESTROYED*** THE BLACK VORTEX THE SECOND I SAW IT.

GARA, ***LISTEN***-- WE WANT TO HELP YOU!

BUT ***SPARTAX--!***

WOULD YOU SAVE SPARTAX AT THE EXPENSE OF THE ***NEXT PLANET?***

"THE NEXT TEN?
"THE NEXT TEN THOUSAND?
"UNTOLD TRILLIONS OF LIVES HINGE ON WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
"IMAGINE WHAT THE BLACK VORTEX WOULD DO TO THE REST OF THE COSMOS.
"IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD DO TO EARTH.
"NOW DO YOU UNDERSTAND? I WILL NEVER ALLOW THE BLACK VORTEX TO BE USED AGAIN."

YOU'RE WRONG. AND A COWARD. YOU'D LET SPARTAX DIE TO ABSOLVE YOUR GUILT?
ONLY USING THE VORTEX TO SAVE SPARTAX WILL REDEEM IT. AND YOU.
BUT YOU MIGHT DAMN YOURSELF. YOU MIGHT BECOME CRAZY WITH POWER.
HAUNTED, DRIVEN... BITTER AND ALONE.
YOU MIGHT BECOME LIKE ME.
YOU WILL ENDURE UNIMAGINABLE CHANGES. YET YOU WILL NEED TO REMEMBER THE TINY DESIRES OF THE PERSON YOU ARE NOW.
ENTIRE ARMS OF GALAXIES HAVE PERISHED BECAUSE OF THIS MISCALCULATION, SO THINK CAREFULLY--
--WHO AMONG YOU IS STRONG ENOUGH TO DO THIS?
PLAN B.
I HATE SPACE. I DON'T WANT COSMIC POWER. THIS IS SO NOT MY JAM.
I AM THE LAST PERSON WHO WANTS TO DO THIS. THAT'S WHY IT'S GOTTA BE ME.
OLD VULCAN PROVERB: ONLY NIXON CAN GO TO CHINA.

VERY WELL, KATHERINE.
KITTY, NO!
ME! I'LL DO THIS! NOT HER!
WE ALREADY KNOW YOU ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO ENDURE THE VORTEX--
O, LORD OF STARS.
I'M SORRY, PETER, I DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS, BUT THERE'S NO OTHER--
I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS.
OH, PETER... I CAN WALK THROUGH BRICK WALLS. A CUTE BOY CAN'T STOP ME.
EVEN ONE AS CUTE AS YOU.
I MAY BE IN SPACE...BUT I'LL ALWAYS BE AN X-MAN.

I HATE SPACE.

SPACE IS NOT MY SCENE.
IT IS SO NOT MY JAM.
THAT'S WHY IT'S GOTTA BE ME.
DAMN IT, WHY DID I HAVE TO BE RIGHT?
TO BE CONCLUDED IN BLACK VORTEX: OMEGA!

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY & X-MEN

THE BLACK VORTEX

CHAPTER 12

FOLLOW THE SAGA OF THE BLACK VORTEX IN

THE BLACK VORTEX OMEGA #1

COVER ART BY ED MCGUINNESS, MARK FARMER, AND MARTE GRACIA

ON-SALE FEBRUARY

~~THE BLACK VORTEX ALPHA #1~~

~~GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #24~~

~~LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #9~~

~~ALL-NEW X-MEN #38~~

ON-SALE MARCH

~~ALL-NEW X-MEN #39~~

~~GUARDIANS TEAM-UP #3~~

~~GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #25~~

~~NOVA #26~~

~~LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #10~~

ON-SALE APRIL

~~CYCLOPS #12~~

~~CAPTAIN MARVEL #14~~

LEGENDARY STAR-LORD #11

THE BLACK VORTEX OMEGA #1